



***United States Attorney
District of New Jersey***

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 15, 2011

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**FORMER VICE PRESIDENT OF CHARLIE BROWN'S RESTAURANTS
SENTENCED TO HOME CONFINEMENT AND PROBATION
FOR FRAUD CONSPIRACY AND TAX EVASION**

TRENTON, N.J. – The former vice president of the Charlie Brown's chain of restaurants was sentenced today to eight months of home confinement and three years of probation for conspiring to defraud the company by accepting more than \$1 million in kickbacks in exchange for awarding contracts to vendors, U.S. Attorney Paul J. Fishman announced.

Michael Mulligan, 51, of West Milford, N.J., previously pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Mary L. Cooper to an Information charging him with one count each of conspiracy to commit mail fraud and tax evasion. Judge Cooper also imposed the sentence today in Trenton federal court.

According to documents filed in this and related cases and statements made in court:

From at least as early as 1999 through 2008, Mulligan was the vice president of Charlie Brown's Acquisition Corporation. Mulligan and a co-conspirator, Charlie Brown's president and CEO Russel D'Anton, used their positions as executives at Charlie Brown's to direct business to vendors who paid them kickbacks in the form of cash, checks, and in-kind payments.

Mulligan admitted that he accepted kickbacks from a variety of vendors, including a construction company and vendors who provided Charlie Brown's with refrigeration services and bakery products. The kickbacks given to Mulligan and D'Anton included expensive home appliances, checks, and cash.

Mulligan also took steps to conceal the payments, purposely failing to report the value of the kickbacks as income on his personal federal tax returns.

In addition to the term of home confinement and probation, Mulligan will be required to pay restitution in an amount to be determined.

D'Anton pleaded guilty to one count each of conspiracy to commit mail fraud and tax evasion and was recently sentenced to two years in prison. David Slabon, 44, of Sea Girt, N.J., admitted to paying kickbacks while serving as the president and CEO of Designline Construction Services. Slabon pleaded guilty to a criminal Information charging him with one count each of conspiracy to commit commercial bribery and conspiracy to commit wire fraud, and awaits sentencing.

U.S. Attorney Fishman credited special agents of the FBI, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Michael B. Ward; and the IRS, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Victor W. Lessoff, with the investigation leading to today's sentence.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Kelly of the U.S. Attorney's Office Criminal Division in Newark.

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Defense counsel: Richard Regan, Esq., Teaneck, N.J.